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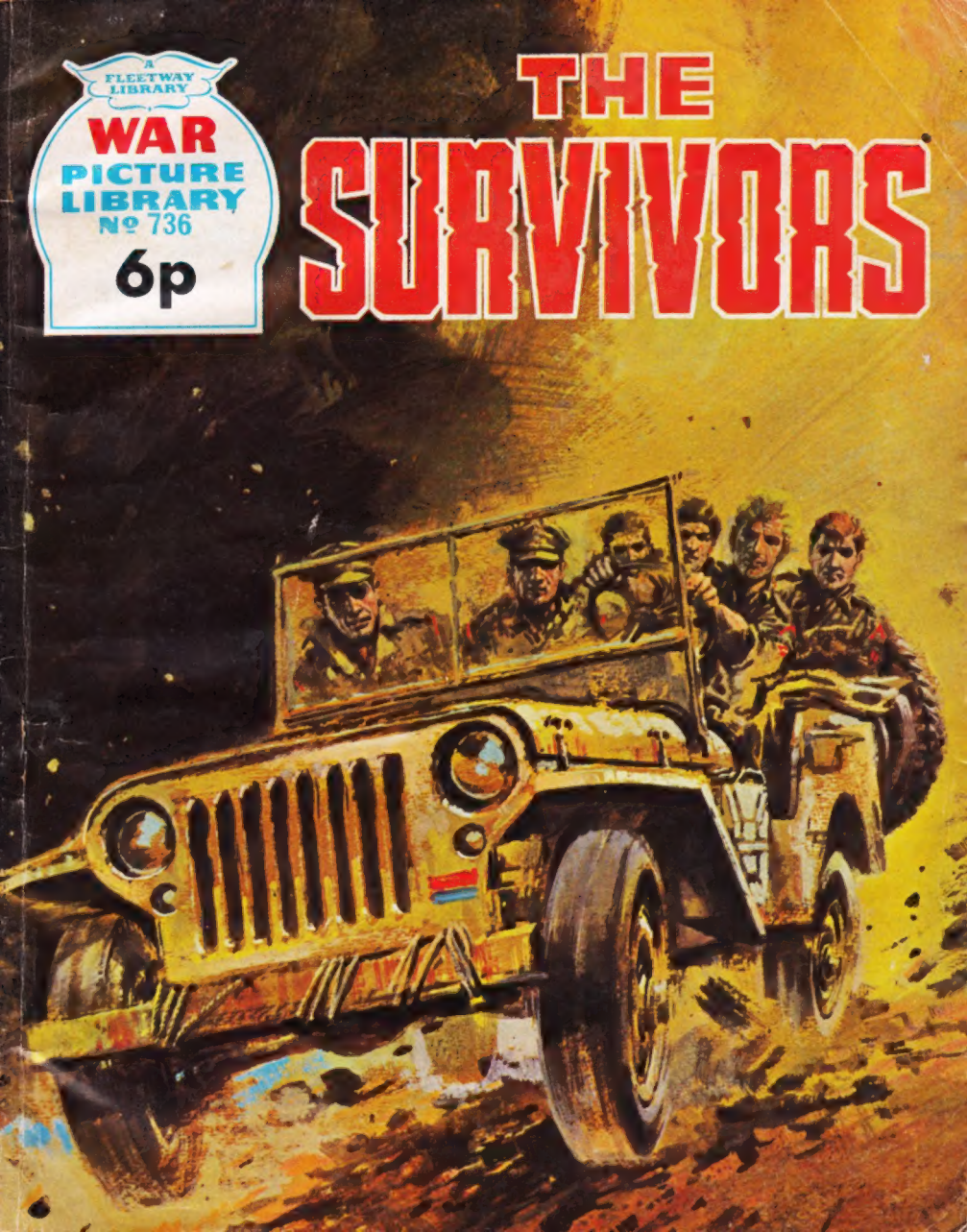
THE SURVIVORS



ALSO ON SALE NOW

BATTLE

PICTURE LIBRARY

No. 609 STEADY, THE GUARDS!
No. 610 GO OUT FIGHTING!
No. 611 FLASH-POINT
No. 612 TURRET GUNNER
No. 613 NO MAN'S LAND
No. 614 ESCAPE ROUTE
No. 615 STRIKE SQUADRON
No. 616 THE HATED BREED

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ALL ACTION ISSUES ARE ON SALE EVERY MONTH

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The SURVIVORS

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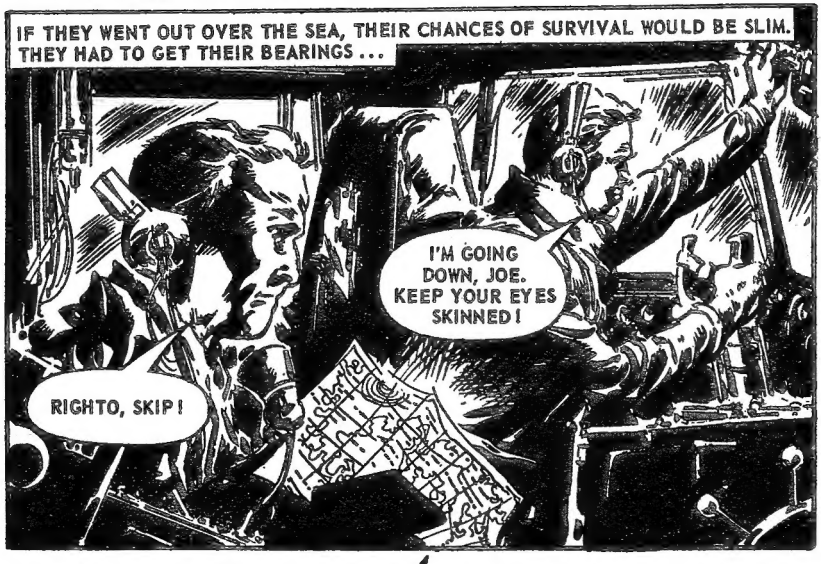
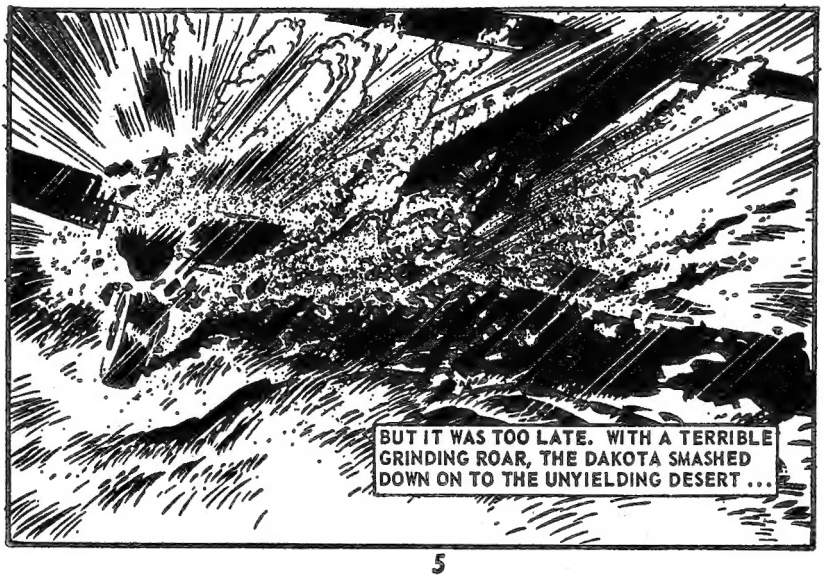
Chapter I. THE BOX



THE PILOT CAME DOWN SLOWLY THROUGH SWIRLING CLOUDS OF SAND, THAT BATTERED AGAINST THE COCKPIT ...
PROVES WE'RE STILL OVER LAND, ANYWAY!

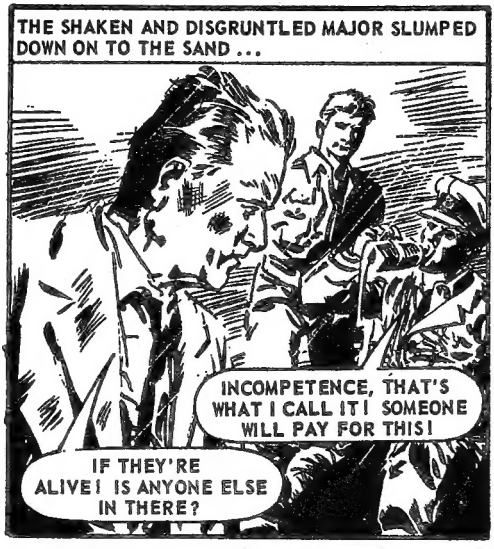
SUDDENLY THEY FLEW INTO A CLEARER PATCH OF SKY AND DEATH WAS STARING THEM IN THE FACE ...
WE'RE NEARLY ON THE DECK! TAKE HER UP, SKIPPER!


BUT IT WAS TOO LATE. WITH A TERRIBLE GRINDING ROAR, THE DAKOTA SMASHED DOWN ON TO THE UNYIELDING DESERT ...

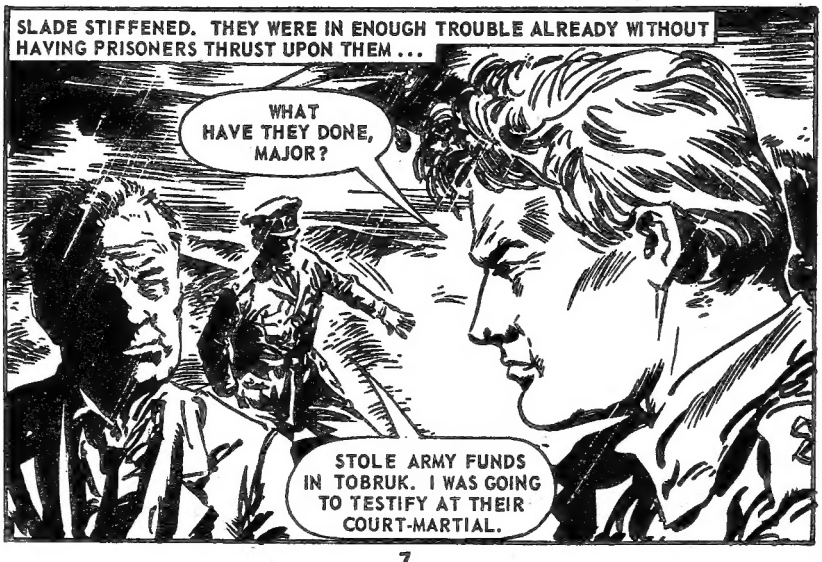
LIEUTENANT JAMES SLADE HAD BEEN GOING ON LEAVE, BUT THOUGHTS OF LEAVE WERE FAR FROM HIS MIND AS HE STRUGGLED TO BRING HIS REELING SENSES BACK TO NORMAL...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, LIEUTENANT?
I...I THINK SO, SIR. WHAT HAPPENED?

WE'RE DOWN IN THE DESERT. YOU AND I MUST HAVE BEEN THROWN CLEAR.
WE'D BETTER SEE IF ANYONE ELSE SURVIVED...

SUDDENLY, A DISHEVELLED FIGURE STUMBLED FROM THE SHATTERED FUSELAGE...
SLADE! PROFESSOR PELL! ARE YOU TWO ALL RIGHT?
WE'RE OKAY, MAJOR SPERRY.


THE SHAKEN AND DISGRUNTLED MAJOR SLUMPED DOWN ON TO THE SAND ...
INCOMPETENCE, THAT'S WHAT I CALL IT! SOMEONE WILL PAY FOR THIS!
IF THEY'RE ALIVE! IS ANYONE ELSE IN THERE?

IF YOU MEAN THOSE PRISONERS AND THEIR ESCORT, YES.


SLADE STIFFENED. THEY WERE IN ENOUGH TROUBLE ALREADY WITHOUT HAVING PRISONERS THRUST UPON THEM ...
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE, MAJOR?
STOLE ARMY FUNDS IN TOBRUK. I WAS GOING TO TESTIFY AT THEIR COURT-MARTIAL.

LIEUTENANT SLADE HAD BEEN WORKING OUT THEIR CHANCES OF SURVIVAL. THE STORM HAD ABATED NOW, LEAVING THE DESERT BATHED IN AN ALMOST UNNATURAL CALM ...

WE'LL HAVE TO COLLECT ALL THE SUPPLIES AND ARMS WE CAN. THEN MAKE FOR THE COAST ROAD. I'LL TELL THE OTHERS.

GOOD! GOOD! TELL THEM TO HURRY, LIEUTENANT.

SLADE WAS TWO YARDS FROM THE FUSELAGE WHEN ONE OF THE PRISONERS STEPPED OUT. THE LIEUTENANT FOUND HIMSELF STARING DOWN THE MUZZLE OF A SERVICE REVOLVER...

THAT'S FAR ENOUGH, LIEUTENANT.

SLADE DID NOT HESITATE FOR A SECOND. HE THREW HIMSELF FORWARD, SENDING THE PRISONER SPRAWLING WITH A CRASHING RIGHT.

UGH!

BUT THE MAN WAS A PARATROOPER, TRAINED IN THE ART OF CLOSE COMBAT. AS SLADE CLOSED IN AGAIN ...

NO, YOU DON'T!

THE PRISONER WAS REACHING FOR THE REVOLVER WHEN A HARSH SHOUT STOPPED HIM IN HIS TRACKS . . .

DON'T TOUCH IT OR YOU'RE A DEAD MAN, KRANE!

UNDER THE UNWAVERING THREAT OF THE M.P's TOMMY GUN, KRANE AND HIS FELLOW PRISONER, PRIVATE RORKE, WERE BROUGHT TO HEEL ...

WE'LL HAVE TO KEEP AN EYE ON THEM! I'M HOLDING YOU PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE, CORPORAL.

FAIR ENOUGH, SIR. BUT IF YOU HADN'T LEFT THAT REVOLVER ON THE SEAT ...

MAJOR SPERRY FLUSHED AT THE CORPORAL'S WORDS, BUT HID HIS EMBARRASSMENT BY ROUNDING ON KRANE AND RORKE ...

ANY ATTEMPT AT ESCAPE AND I'LL SHOOT YOU DOWN! UNDERSTAND?

DON'T WORRY, MAJOR. WE'VE GOT NOWHERE TO GO, HAVE WE?

LIEUTENANT SLADE AND PROFESSOR PELL HAD BUSIED THEMSELVES SAVING WHAT SUPPLIES THEY COULD FROM THE WRECKED DAKOTA ...

THERE'S A BOX IN THE CARGO THAT WE MUST TAKE WITH US. PERHAPS YOU COULD GET THOSE TWO MEN TO CARRY IT OUT, MAJOR.

I'M SORRY, PROFESSOR. THIS IS A MILITARY OPERATION. WE HAVE NO ROOM FOR CIVILIAN LUGGAGE!

THE PROFESSOR IGNORED THE OBVIOUS CONTEMPT IN THE MAJOR'S VOICE AND CALMLY PRODUCED A PASS FROM HIS POCKET ...

I'LL LEAVE IT IF YOU'LL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY, MAJOR. BUT THESE ARE MY ORDERS FROM THE G.O.C. HIMSELF.

THERE WAS NO GOING AGAINST DIRECT ORDERS FROM A GENERAL AND THE PROFESSOR'S CASE WAS BROUGHT OUT ...

COR! THIS THING WEIGHS A TON!

AND GUESS WHO'LL BE CARRYING IT, KRANE ...

WITH AS MANY SUPPLIES AS THEY COULD CARRY, THE SURVIVORS SET OUT ON THE LONG HAUL TOWARDS THE COAST ...

WHAT YOU GOT IN HERE, PROF?

SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE. SO BE CAREFUL WITH IT.

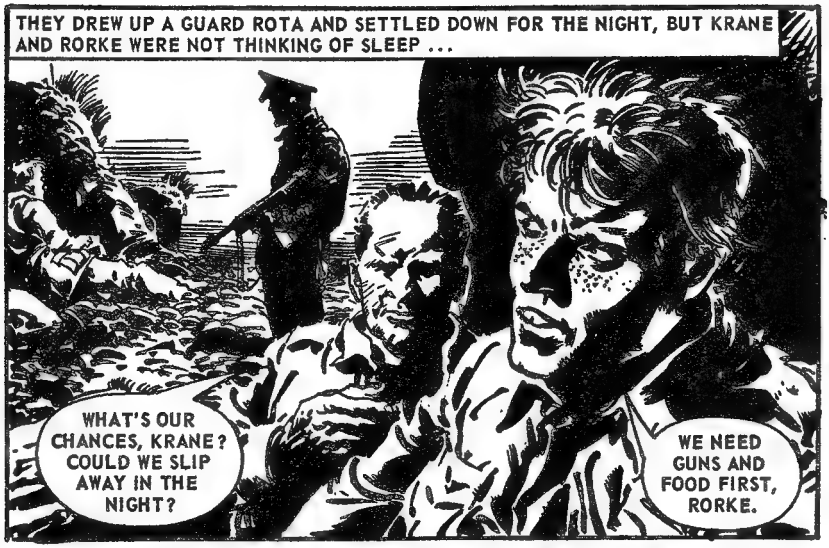
WHAT ARE OUR CHANCES OF FINDING ONE OF OUR PATROLS, LIEUTENANT?

I'M AFRAID THEY DON'T OPERATE IN THIS AREA, SIR. WE MIGHT MEET SOME ARABS, BUT I WOULDN'T PUT MY TRUST IN THEM.

IT WAS THOSE VERY ARABS WHO FOUND THE FRESH TRACKS HALF AN HOUR LATER ...
THERE ARE ONLY SEVEN OF THEM.
THEY CANNOT HAVE GONE VERY FAR. IF ALLAH WILLS IT WE SHALL FIND THEM.

BY EVENING, THE SURVIVORS HAD TRUDGED SEVERAL MILES. AS THE SUN BEGAN TO SET, THEY SEARCHED FOR SOMEWHERE TO REST ...
THAT OUTCROP OF ROCK WILL DO.
NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON, LIEUTENANT.

SOON, LIEUTENANT SLADE AND THE OTHER M.P. CORPORAL HAD PREPARED A WELCOME MEAL ...
HOW BAD ARE THOSE PRISONERS, CORPORAL? WILL THEY TRY ANYTHING?
THEY'RE RIGHT VILLAINS, SIR. I WOULDN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF THEM.


THEY DREW UP A GUARD ROTA AND SETTLED DOWN FOR THE NIGHT, BUT KRANE AND RORKE WERE NOT THINKING OF SLEEP ...
WHAT'S OUR CHANCES, KRANE? COULD WE SLIP AWAY IN THE NIGHT?
WE NEED GUNS AND FOOD FIRST, RORKE.

WAIT UNTIL THEY'RE ALL ASLEEP, THEN WE'LL ONLY HAVE THE GUARD TO WORRY ABOUT.
PITY IT'S THAT CORPORAL. HE'S A TOUGH NUT, THAT ONE!

THE CORPORAL HAD HEARD THE QUIET MUTTERING FROM THE TWO MEN. HE KNEW THEY WOULD BE PLANNING SOMETHING ...

ALL RIGHT, YOU TWO, SETTLE DOWN. SAVE YOUR BREATH FOR THE MARCH TOMORROW.

FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, THE CORPORAL FORGOT ABOUT KRANE ...

I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING, RORKE. YOU MUST BE DREAMING!

THE CORPORAL HALF TURNED AT THE SLIGHT SOUND BEHIND HIM, BUT KRANE WAS TOO QUICK FOR HIM ...

UGH!

GRAB THE GUN, RORKE!

THE CORPORAL SLUMPED UNCONSCIOUS TO THE GROUND. BUT UNKNOWN TO KRANE AND RORKE, UNSEEN EYES HAD BEEN WATCHING THEIR EVERY MOVE ...

THEY FIGHT AMONG THEMSELVES!

IT WILL MAKE OUR TASK EASIER. COME!

LIKE SHADOWS, THE ARABS DRIFTED DOWN INTO THE WADI, TAKING THE TWO MEN COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE ...

UGH!

WHAT THE ...! ARABS!

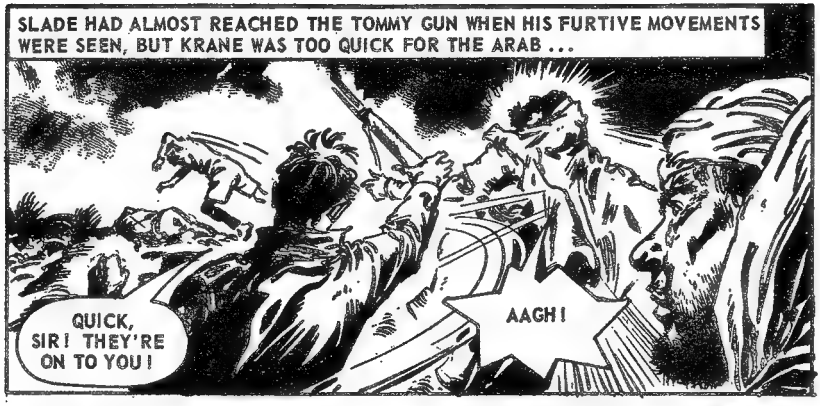
RORKE'S ANGUISHED CRY WOKE THE OTHERS, WHO FOUND THEMSELVES SURROUNDED ...
THE CORPORAL'S DEAD! THESE DEVILS HAVE KILLED HIM!
I'M IN LUCK. HE THINKS THE ARABS DID IT.

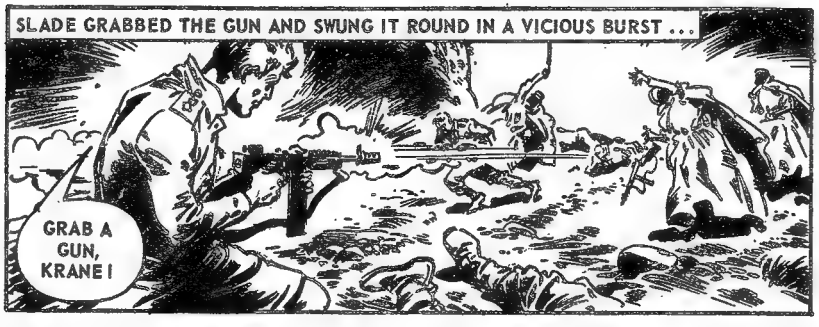
BUT KRANE KNEW HIS LUCK COULD NOT LAST LONG. HE REALISED THE FATE THAT AWAITED THEM AT THE HANDS OF THE ARABS ...
WHEN THEY'VE FINISHED LOOTING, THEY'LL CUT ALL OUR THROATS, KRANE.
THERE'S ONE CHANCE, SIR. I SAW THE CORPORAL DROP HIS GUN. THE ARABS HAVEN'T SEEN IT YET.

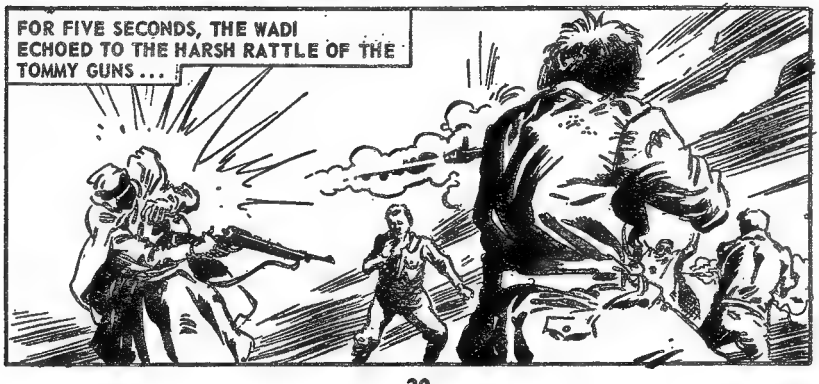
IT WAS A SLIM CHANCE, BUT IT WAS THE ONLY ONE THEY HAD ...
I'LL TRY AND REACH IT. BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO DISTRACT THE ARABS FOR ME.
LEAVE THAT TO ME, SIR.

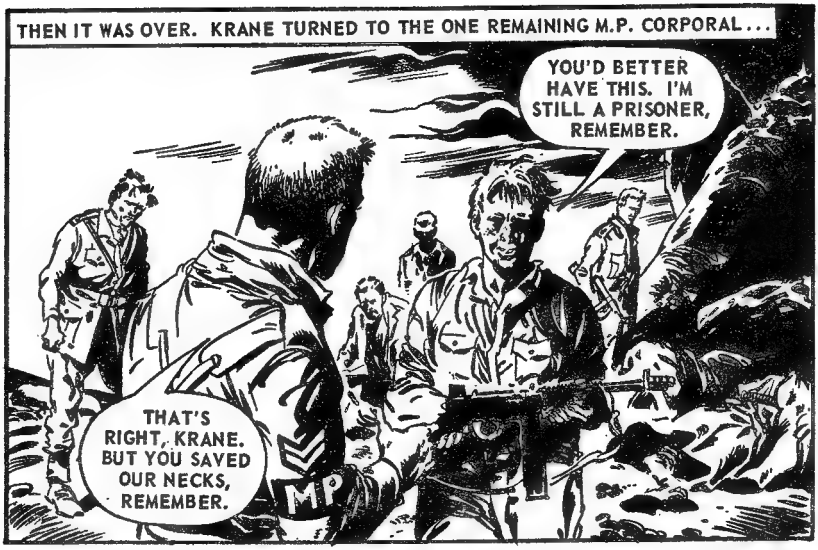
THE ARABS WERE HAVING TROUBLE IN OPENING THE PROFESSOR'S CASE WHEN KRANE STEPPED FORWARD ...
'ERE, LET AN EXPERT HAVE A GO!
WATCH HIM, CLOSELY. IT MAY BE A TRICK.

AS KRANE STOOPED BESIDE THE BOX, ALL THE ARABS TURNED THEIR ATTENTION TOWARDS HIM. IT WAS THE MOMENT LIEUTENANT SLADE WAITING FOR ...


SLADE HAD ALMOST REACHED THE TOMMY GUN WHEN HIS FURTIVE MOVEMENTS WERE SEEN, BUT KRANE WAS TOO QUICK FOR THE ARAB ...
QUICK, SIR! THEY'RE ON TO YOU!
AAGH!


SLADE GRABBED THE GUN AND SWUNG IT ROUND IN A VICIOUS BURST ...
GRAB A GUN, KRANE!


FOR FIVE SECONDS, THE WADI ECHOED TO THE HARSH RATTLE OF THE TOMMY GUNS ...


THEN IT WAS OVER. KRANE TURNED TO THE ONE REMAINING M.P. CORPORAL...
YOU'D BETTER HAVE THIS. I'M STILL A PRISONER, REMEMBER.
THAT'S RIGHT, KRANE. BUT YOU SAVED OUR NECKS, REMEMBER.
MP

THEY BROKE CAMP AND MOVED ON IMMEDIATELY. THE SOUND OF FIRING MIGHT WELL BRING THEM MORE UNWELCOME VISITORS ...
IT SEEMS AS THOUGH YOUNG KRANE IS NOT A COMPLETE ROGUE AFTER ALL, LIEUTENANT.
I DON'T KNOW, SIR. I WOULDN'T TRUST HIM. I THINK HE'S UP TO SOMETHING.

RORKE WAS ALSO PUZZLED BY HIS FRIEND'S BEHAVIOUR ...

WHY DIDN'T YOU USE THE GUN ON THE BLIGHTERS, KRANE? IT WAS A GOOD CHANCE ...

IT WASN'T THE RIGHT TIME. WE NEED THEM TO HELP US GET TO THE COAST.

KRANE'S HELPFUL ATTITUDE PAID DIVIDENDS WHEN THEY HALTED FOR THEIR NEXT BREAK ...

IN VIEW OF WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT, KRANE, I'VE DECIDED THAT WE CAN TRUST YOU TO TAKE A TURN ON GUARD.

THANK YOU, SIR. I APPRECIATE THAT.

THE MAJOR EVEN GAVE THE TWO PRISONERS A REST FROM CARRYING THE HEAVY METAL BOX, LEAVING THE TASK TO THE PROFESSOR AND THE M.P. CORPORAL ...

YOU AFTER A MEDAL OR SOMETHING?

SOMETHING BETTER, RORKE. MUCH BETTER.

YOU'VE NOTICED HOW HEAVY THAT BOX IS?
'COURSE I HAVE. I'VE CARRIED IT FAR ENOUGH. IT'S LIKE LEAD.

BUT WE KNOW IT ISN'T. NO, MATE, THAT BOX IS FULL OF GOLD!
GOLD! THEN IT MUST BE WORTH A FEW QUID!

YOU BET IT IS. MORE THAN ENOUGH TO GET US OUT OF THIS WAR ONCE WE REACH CAIRO ... AND WE WON'T BE GOING THERE WITH THIS LOT EITHER!

FOR MILE AFTER WEARY MILE THEY TRUDGED ACROSS THE DESERT. THE BOILING SUN TAKING ITS TOLL OF BOTH BODIES AND TEMPERS ...

IS THIS ALL I GET?

I'M AFRAID SO, SIR. WE'VE GOT TO GO EASY ON FOOD AND WATER.

AND HOW MUCH ARE YOU GIVING YOURSELF, CORPORAL? I'LL BET YOU HAD DOUBLE THIS AMOUNT!

LIEUTENANT SLADE STEPPED QUICKLY BETWEEN THE TWO MEN...

CORPORAL WILSON BROUGHT WHAT I GAVE HIM, MAJOR. BUT IF YOU THINK YOU'VE BEEN CHEATED ...

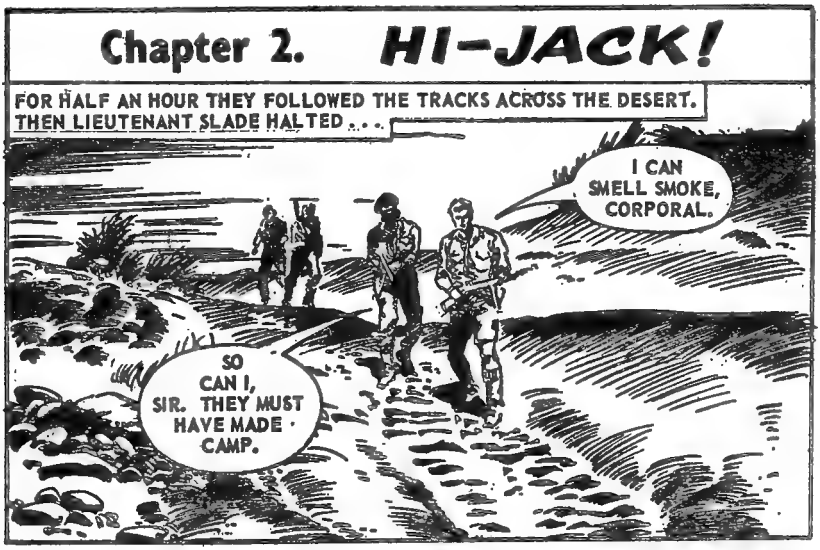
NO...I...I'M SORRY. I LOST MY TEMPER ...

THE MAJOR MOVED SLOWLY AWAY. KRANE WATCHED HIM GO AND SMILED TO HIMSELF...
IF WE LEAVE 'EM LONG ENOUGH, THEY'LL KILL EACH OTHER OFF AND SAVE US THE TROUBLE, RORKE!

IT WAS TOWARDS THE EVENING THAT THEY HAD THEIR FIRST SIGN OF THE PRESENCE OF OTHERS...
THEY'RE JEEP TRACKS. ONE OF OUR PATROLS, LIEUTENANT ?
IT'S A JEEP ALL RIGHT. BUT I DOUBT IF IT'S DRIVEN BY OUR LADS. PROBABLY BEEN CAPTURED BY THE JERRIES.

BUT WHETHER IT WAS DRIVEN BY ENGLISH OR GERMAN IT WAS TRANSPORT . . .
IF THEY ARE GERMANS THERE CAN ONLY BE HALF A DOZEN AT THE MOST.
YOU'RE THE INFANTRYMAN, LIEUTENANT. I'LL LEAVE THE DECISION TO YOU . . .
SLADE WAS NOT SURE WHETHER THE MAJOR WAS SHOWING SENSE, OR JUST DUCKING RESPONSIBILITY. BUT THEY NEEDED THAT JEEP . . .
YOU AND THE PROFESSOR STAY AND LOOK AFTER THE SUPPLIES, MAJOR. WE'LL LEAVE YOU THE REVOLVERS FOR PROTECTION.
WE'LL BE ALL RIGHT, LIEUTENANT. GOOD LUCK.

Chapter 2. HI-JACK!



THEY WAITED PATIENTLY FOR THE DESERT NIGHT TO CLOSE IN . . .

TWO OF THEM ARE GOING INTO THE TENT, SIR.

ALL RIGHT, CORPORAL. I'LL TAKE THE SENTRY, YOU FOLLOW ME IN. BUT REMEMBER, KEEP IT QUIET.

THE LIEUTENANT WAS WITHIN THREE YARDS OF THE SENTRY WHEN HIS FOOT SLIPPED ON THE LOOSE SHALE .

UGH !

HIMMEL ! ENGLANDER !

LUCKILY FOR SLADE, THE CORPORAL WAS ALERT AND READY . . .

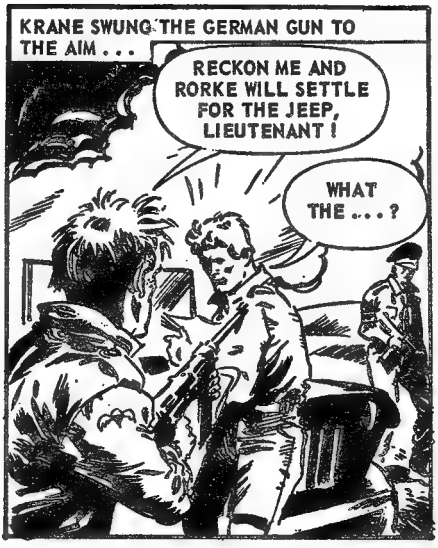
AAGH !

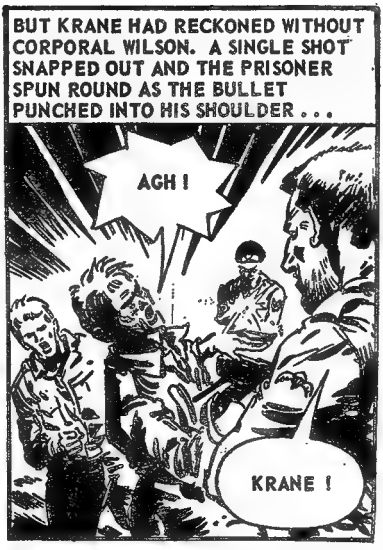
LIEUTENANT SLADE WAS ON HIS FEET AND REACHING FOR HIS TOMMY GUN WHEN THE TWO GERMANS RAN FROM THE TENT. HE FIRED FROM THE HIP WITH DEVASTATING ACCURACY . . .

AAAGH !

AS HE HURRIED OVER TO THE JEEP, SLADE FAILED TO SEE KRANE STOOP TO PICK UP A FALLEN SCHMEISSER . . .

JEEP'S ALL RIGHT ! FOOD AND WATER AND MAPS !


KRANE SWUNG THE GERMAN GUN TO THE AIM . . .
RECKON ME AND RORKE WILL SETTLE FOR THE JEEP, LIEUTENANT !
WHAT THE . . . ?


BUT KRANE HAD RECKONED WITHOUT CORPORAL WILSON. A SINGLE SHOT SNAPPED OUT AND THE PRISONER SPUN ROUND AS THE BULLET PUNCHED INTO HIS SHOULDER . . .
AGH !
KRANE !

UNDER THE UNWAVERING THREAT OF CORPORAL WILSON'S TOMMY GUN, RORKE SLOWLY RAISED HIS HANDS IN THE AIR . . .
ALL RIGHT, KRANE, ON YOUR FEET. LOAD THEM INTO THE JEEP, CORPORAL AND KEEP THEM COVERED.
RIGHT, SIR.

LOADING EVERYTHING THEY COULD FIND INTO THE JEEP, THEY SET OFF TO PICK UP THE MAJOR AND PROFESSOR PELL . . .

YOU'D HAVE DONE BETTER TO KILL ME BACK THERE, COPPER !

DON'T TEMPT ME, KRANE. IT'S NEVER TOO LATE.

A JEEP ! IT'S THEM.

EXCELLENT. I KNEW THAT YOUNG MAN WOULD DO IT !

SLADE TOLD THEM BRIEFLY WHAT HAD HAPPENED, THEN PULLED OUT ONE OF THE GERMAN MAPS . . .

THE GERMANS MARKED THE SPOT WHERE THEY STOPPED FOR THE NIGHT.

WE'RE FARTHER FROM THE COAST THAN WE THOUGHT.

BUT THE DISTANCE NO LONGER REALLY MATTERED. WITH THE JEEP'S EXTRA RATIONS THEY HAD MORE THAN ENOUGH SUPPLIES TO LAST THEM . . .
THIS MAP SHOWS ENEMY FUEL AND FOOD DUMPS RIGHT ACROSS THE DESERT.
IT LOOKS LIKE THEY ARE PLANNING AN ATTACK ON OUR LINES OF COMMUNICATION.
AFTER THEIR BEST MEAL IN DAYS THEY SET OFF ONCE AGAIN . . .
WITH ANY LUCK WE'LL REACH THE COAST IN TWENTY FOUR HOURS.
BUT LUCK DESERTED THEM WITHIN THE NEXT HOUR.
IT'S A A JERRY ALL RIGHT. AND HE'S SEEN US !

THE PLANE PASSED LOW OVERHEAD . . .
HE'S GETTING A GOOD LOOK AT US !
PROBABLY RADIOING OUR POSITION RIGHT NOW !

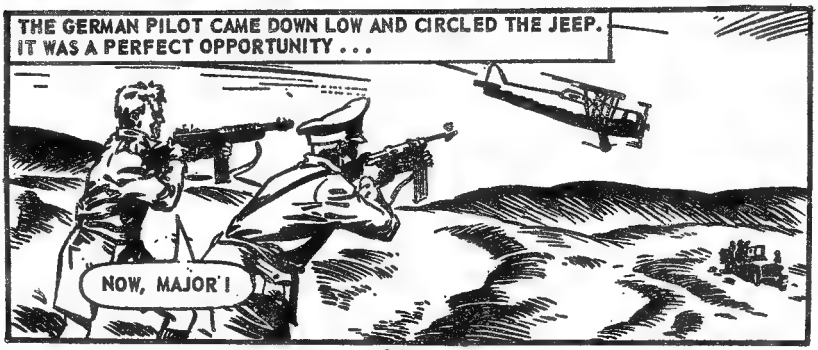
SUDDENLY THE PILOT BANKED AND HEADED FOR THE HORIZON . . .
GONE TO GET HIS PALS I RECKON.
WE'D BETTER MAKE FOR THE COAST AS FAST AS WE CAN.

BUT SLADE KNEW THAT WOULD BE A FATAL MISTAKE . . .
THAT'S JUST WHAT THEY'D EXPECT US TO DO. WE NEED COVER AND THAT RANGE OF HILLS IS OUR BEST BET.
IT'S A LONG WAY ROUND, LIEUTENANT. BUT YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S BETTER THAN BEING CAUGHT IN THE OPEN.

BUT THEY HAD NOT TRAVELLED FAR WHEN IT BECAME OBVIOUS THAT THE SPOTTER AIRCRAFT HAD CONTACTED A GROUND PATROL . . .
DUST OVER THERE, SIR.
I SEE IT. SEEMS TO BE MOVING AWAY FROM US THOUGH. LET'S TAKE A LOOK . . .

SLADE AND THE MAJOR SCRAMBLED UP THE NEAREST RIDGE .
THEY'RE JERRIES ALL RIGHT ! BUT WE'VE A TEN MINUTE START ON THEM. WE'D BETTER FIND SOME COVER . . .

BUT THEY HAD RECKONED WITHOUT THE GERMAN SPOTTER PLANE . . .
WE'LL NEVER ESCAPE WITH HIM REPORTING OUR MOVEMENTS. LET'S SEE HOW GOOD A SHOT YOU ARE, MAJOR !


THE GERMAN PILOT CAME DOWN LOW AND CIRCLED THE JEEP. IT WAS A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY . . .
NOW, MAJOR !

W.P.—736

A TEN SECOND BURST OF TOMMY GUN FIRE SWEPT ALONG THE AIRCRAFT'S FUSELAGE, THE ENGINE COUGHED AND DIED . . .

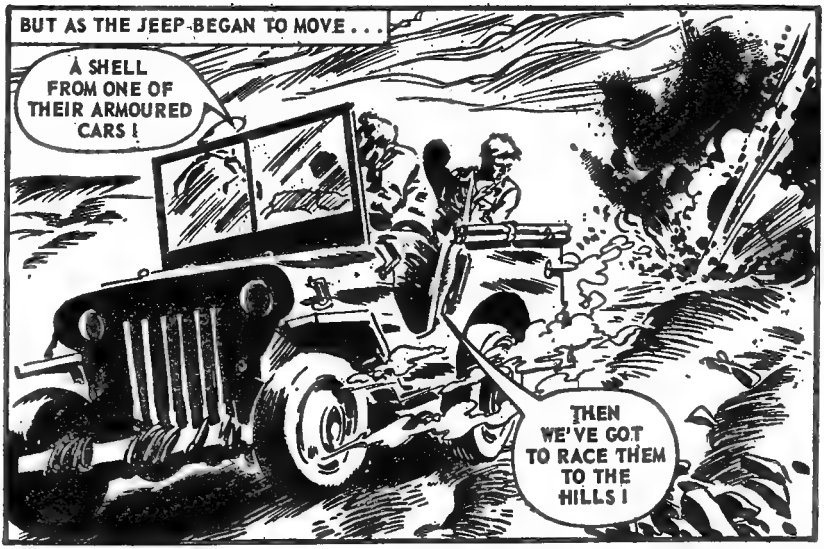
HE'S STALLING !

WE GOT HIM !

THE DOOMED AIRCRAFT PLUNGED INTO THE DESERT LEAVING A COLUMN OF BLACK SMOKE DRIFTING INTO THE CLOUDLESS SKY . . .

WELL DONE, SIR.

LET'S HOPE HE HAD NO TIME TO RADIO OUR POSITION. LET'S GET MOVING !


BUT AS THE JEEP BEGAN TO MOVE . . .
A SHELL FROM ONE OF THEIR ARMOURED CARS !
THEN WE'VE GOT TO RACE THEM TO THE HILLS !

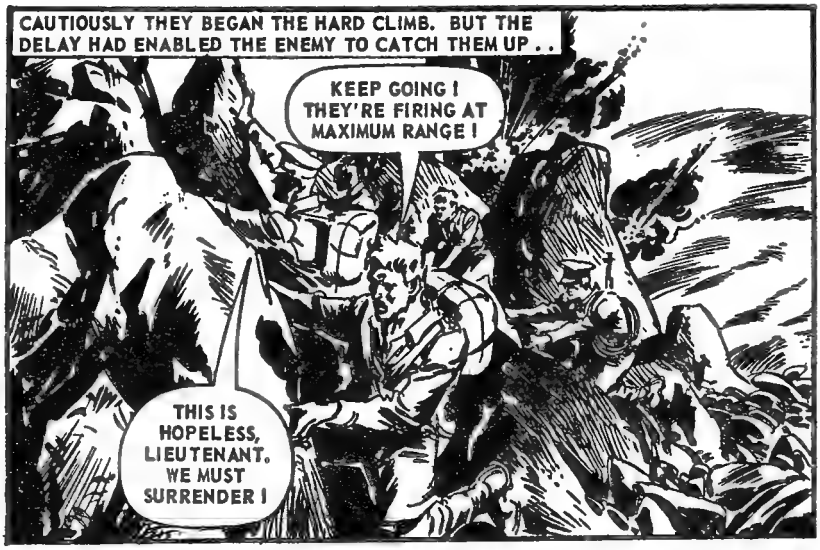
LIEUTENANT SLADE SENT THE JEEP BUMPING AND SPEEDING ACROSS THE SAND, CONSTANTLY ALTERING DIRECTION TO THROW THE ENEMY GUNNERS OFF THEIR AIM . . .
THEY CAN'T FOLLOW US FAST ON THIS SURFACE !
THEN THERE'S STILL A CHANCE . . .

TWO MILES FARTHER ON, A RANGE OF HILLS ROSE STEEPLY OUT OF THE SAND . . .
WE'LL HAVE TO SKIRT THOSE HILLS.
THE JERRIES HAVE DROPPED WELL BACK ANYHOW !

SUDDENLY THE ENGINE COUGHED AND DIED . . .
WHAT'S WRONG ?
WE'RE OUT OF PETROL ! OF ALL THE ROTTEN LUCK !

THEY SEARCHED HURRIEDLY THROUGH THE JEEP BUT THERE WERE NO SPARE CANS . . .
RIGHT ! TAKE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN CARRY. WE'LL HAVE TO GET INTO THOSE HILLS !

YOU CAN'T KEEP US TIED UP, LIEUTENANT. WE WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE IN A FIGHT !
HE'S RIGHT, SIR.
VERY WELL. BUT KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON THEM, CORPORAL.


CAUTIOUSLY THEY BEGAN THE HARD CLIMB. BUT THE DELAY HAD ENABLED THE ENEMY TO CATCH THEM UP . .
KEEP GOING ! THEY'RE FIRING AT MAXIMUM RANGE !
THIS IS HOPELESS, LIEUTENANT. WE MUST SURRENDER !

THE LIEUTENANT TURNED ANGRILY . . .
YOU SURRENDER IF YOU WANT TO, MAJOR. BUT WE'RE NOT DONE YET. THEY CAN'T GET THOSE CARS UP HERE AND IF THEY TRY IT ON FOOT, WE'VE GOT THE ADVANTAGE !

WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, THE MAJOR KEPT CLIMBING. TEN MINUTES LATER THEY HAD REACHED THE SUMMIT . . .

WE'LL HAVE TO FIND A GOOD POSITION TO DEFEND ! THEIR INFANTRY ARE ON THE WAY !

A RUGGED PEAK OFFERED THEM A CLEAR FIELD OF FIRE . . .

WE CAN HOLD OUT HERE WHILE THE AMMO LASTS, SIR. BUT WHAT THEN ?

I DON'T KNOW, CORPORAL. LET'S FACE THAT WHEN IT HAPPENS.

THE GERMANS CAME UP THE SLOPE CAUTIOUSLY. THEY WERE SEASONED TROOPS WHO KNEW THE VALUE OF USING EVERY SCRAP OF COVER . . .

BUT WHEN THEY REACHED THE TOP, A HAIL OF FIRE FROM THE BRITISH CUT INTO THEM . . .

LET 'EM HAVE IT !

AAAGH !

THE ENEMY RETURNED THE FIRE FROM COVER BUT THE GUNFIRE WAS INEFFECTIVE . . .
THEY CAN'T GET US WITHOUT COMING OVER THE TOP. THAT'S OUR BIG ADVANTAGE !

ONE MINUTE LATER, THE GERMANS BROKE COVER AND ATTACKED IN FORCE, URGED ON BY THEIR OFFICER . . .
KEEP GOING ! KEEP GOING !

A DESPERATE FEW MANAGED TO REACH THE BRITISH POSITION . . .
DRIVE THEM BACK !

THE DEATH OF THEIR OFFICER BROKE THE GERMANS' WILL TO FIGHT. IN A DISORGANISED STREAM, THEY TURNED AND FLED . . .

CEASE FIRE ! SAVE YOUR AMMO !

HERE, RORKE. HIDE THIS LUGER. IT MAY COME IN HANDY LATER.

NIGHT FELL AND THE ENEMY DID NOT RETURN . . .

THEY'VE TAKEN COVER FARTHER DOWN THE HILL, SIR.

THEY MUST KNOW WE HAVEN'T MANY SUPPLIES. WE'VE GOT TO MAKE USE OF THE DARK.

IF THEY'VE SURROUNDED THE HILL THEY'RE SPREAD PRETTY THINLY. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SNEAK THROUGH THEIR LINES.

IT WAS A GAMBLE, BUT IT OFFERED THEIR ONLY CHANCE OF SURVIVAL . . .

WE'LL USE THE ROPES. TWO MEN AT A TIME WITH THE REST COVERING THEM.

IT WAS A DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS DESCENT EVEN WITH THE ROPES TO HELP THEM . . .

KEEP GOING, MAJOR. YOU'RE NEARLY DOWN.

THEY REACHED THE BASE OF THE CLIFFS UNDETECTED AND PREPARED TO MOVE ON . . .

IS YOUR BOX OF TRICKS SAFE, PROFESSOR ?

YES, LIEUTENANT. THE PRISONERS HAVE IT.

BUT THEY HAD NOT MOVED FAR WHEN THE OMINOUS SHAPES OF THE ENEMY ARMOURED CARS LOOMED OUT OF THE DARKNESS . . .
THEY'VE MOVED THEM IN NEAR THE ROCKS. WE'VE GOT TO GET PAST THEM.
THOSE MEN WILL SEE US FOR CERTAIN, LIEUTENANT !

WE'VE GOT TO CAUSE A DIVERSION. I'LL TAKE CORPORAL WILSON AND CRAWL OVER TO THE LORRY. YOU COVER US FROM HERE.
VERY WELL, LIEUTENANT.

AS STEALTHILY AS SNAKES THE TWO MEN EDGED TOWARDS THE TRUCK. IT WAS FIFTEEN HEART-STOPPING MINUTES BEFORE THEY WERE IN POSITION . . .

THIS SHOULD STIR THEM UP.

THE LIEUTENANT LOBBED THE BURNING RAG INTO THE OPEN BACK OF THE TRUCK. SOON, FLAMES BEGAN TO LICK AROUND THE CANOPY . . .

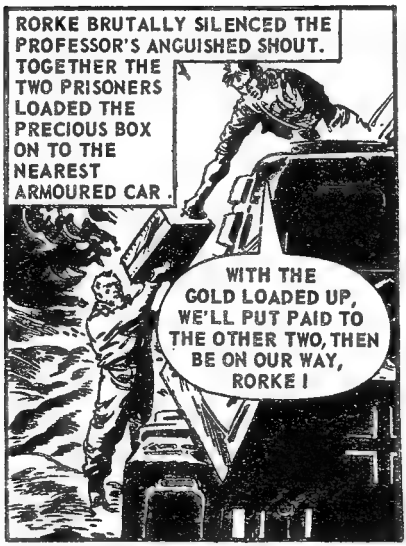
HIMMEL ! THE TRUCK IS ON FIRE !

ALL OUR FUEL IS IN THERE !

AS THE GERMANS NEARED THE LORRY, ONE OF THEM CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF WILSON AND LIEUTENANT SLADE AS THEY DUCKED FOR COVER . . .
HIMMEL ! THE ENGLANDERS !

THE TWO MEN HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO OPEN FIRE . . .
THAT'S TORN IT. THEIR PALS ARE BOUND TO HEAR THE GUNS !

Chapter 3. FOOL'S GOLD


RORKE BRUTALLY SILENCED THE PROFESSOR'S ANGUISHED SHOUT. TOGETHER THE TWO PRISONERS LOADED THE PRECIOUS BOX ON TO THE NEAREST ARMOURED CAR.
WITH THE GOLD LOADED UP, WE'LL PUT PAID TO THE OTHER TWO, THEN BE ON OUR WAY, RORKE!

THE FIRST WARNING LIEUTENANT SLADE HAD, WAS WHEN A SHELL SLAMMED INTO THE ARMOURED CAR BESIDE HIM...
SOMEONE'S IN THE OTHER CAR!
THEY'VE GOT US COLD!

A SECOND SHELL SCREAMED OVER AS A FIGURE STUMBLED TOWARDS THEM...
IT'S THE PROFESSOR!
LIEUTENANT! THE PRISONERS... IN THAT CAR. THEY KILLED THE MAJOR!

THE OTHER ARMOURED CAR WAS THEIR ONLY HOPE. SLADE DASHED TOWARDS IT.

AAGH !

THEY'VE GOT THE LIEUTENANT !

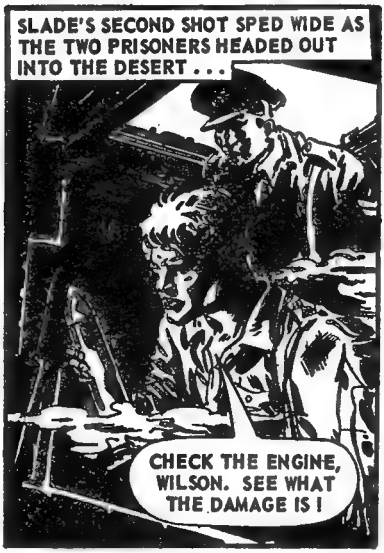
KRANE GRINNED WITH SATISFACTION AS THE LIEUTENANT SLUMPED TO THE GROUND . . .

THAT'S FIXED HIM, RORKE.

I'LL GIVE THE OTHER TWO ANOTHER SHELL !

BUT LIEUTENANT SLADE WAS NOT DEAD. AS THE MACHINE GUN LAPSED INTO SILENCE HE PULLED HIMSELF UP ON TO THE ARMOURED CAR'S METAL HULL.

COME ON, PROF! LET'S GIVE HIM A HAND!



IT DID NOT TAKE AN EXPERT TO KNOW THAT THE ARMOURED CAR WOULD NOT RUN AGAIN.

NO GOOD, SIR. THAT FIRST SHELL WRECKED IT COMPLETELY.

ALL RIGHT, WILSON. BETTER GET BACK INSIDE. WHEN THE JERRIES COME LOOKING IT'LL GIVE US COVER AT LEAST !

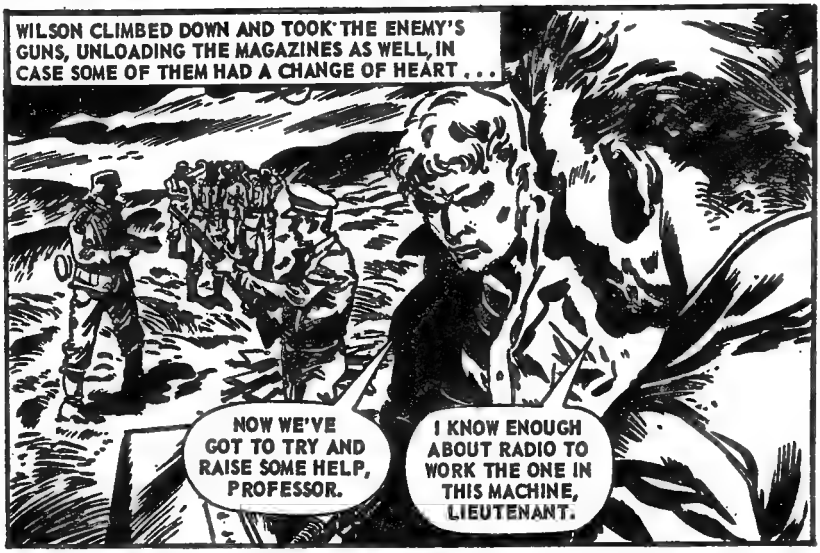
THE GERMAN INFANTRY CAME ALONG MINUTES LATER . . .

WE'VE GOT COMPANY, GENTS. BUT THEY LOOK PRETTY SCARED TO ME !

THE LIEUTENANT CLIMBED UP INTO THE TURRET. HE COULD SEE THE GERMANS EDGING FORWARD CAUTIOUSLY. IT WAS THEN THAT HE DECIDED TO TRY AND BLUFF THE ENEMY . . .

SURRENDER OR WE OPEN FIRE ! YOU CANNOT SURVIVE FOR LONG AGAINST US ! DO NOT THROW YOUR LIVES AWAY USELESSLY !

THERE WAS A LONG UNCERTAIN PAUSE, THEN . . .
DO NOT SHOOT ! WE SURRENDER !
ALL RIGHT, WILSON. GO OUT AND DISARM THEM. I'LL KEEP THEM COVERED FROM HERE !


WILSON CLIMBED DOWN AND TOOK THE ENEMY'S GUNS, UNLOADING THE MAGAZINES AS WELL, IN CASE SOME OF THEM HAD A CHANGE OF HEART . . .
NOW WE'VE GOT TO TRY AND RAISE SOME HELP, PROFESSOR.
I KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT RADIO TO WORK THE ONE IN THIS MACHINE, LIEUTENANT.

THE PROFESSOR WAS AS GOOD AS HIS WORD . . .
I'M IN CONTACT WITH ONE OF OUR PATROLS !
WELL DONE, PROF ! LET ME HAVE A WORD WITH THEM.
MEANWHILE, KRANE AND RORKE HAD ALMOST REACHED THEIR OBJECTIVE, THE COASTAL ROAD . . .
SLOW DOWN, RORKE ! WE'D BETTER FIND A SPOT TO HIDE THIS GOLD !
R.O.2464
A MILE FARTHER ON THEY CAME UPON JUST THE SPOT THEY WERE LOOKING FOR.
THIS ROCK'LL BE EASY TO FIND IN THE FUTURE. WE'LL BURY IT HERE !
I'LL GET THE MAP AND MARK IT, KRANE.

RORKE HAD TURNED TO GO BACK TO THE ARMOURED CAR, WHEN KRANE'S HARSH VOICE MADE HIM SPIN ROUND . . .
YOU WON'T NEED A MAP WHERE YOU'RE GOING, RORKE !
KRANE ! WHAT THE . . . !
RORKE'S ANGUISHED CRY WAS CUT SHORT BY THE DEADLY CRACK OF THE LUGER.
UGH !
THEN KRANE TURNED THE GUN ON TO THE STEEL BOX . . .
I'LL NEED TO TAKE SOME OF THE GOLD WITH ME FOR A STAKE !

THE LOCK SHATTERED QUICKLY, BUT WHEN HE OPENED THE LID KRANE RECEIVED A NASTY SHOCK . . .
ANOTHER BOX ! AND THIS ONE'S LEAD !
HE FORCED OPEN THE INNER BOX . . .
IT'S . . . IT'S LIKE LUMINOUS PAINT, ONLY BRIGHTER !
THERE WAS A GLASS CONTAINER NESTLING INSIDE THE LEAD BOX. KRANE LIFTED IT OUT, BITTER WITH DISAPPOINTMENT . . .
THE PROFESSOR WAS RIGHT ! IT'S SOME SCIENTIFIC JUNK. BUT IT MIGHT BE WORTH A FEW QUID. I'LL TAKE IT ANYWAY !

MEANWHILE, TWENTY MILES TO THE SOUTH, THE BRITISH PATROL HAD COME ACROSS LIEUTENANT SLADE AND HIS COMPANIONS . . .

YOU WERE LUCKY WE WERE IN THE AREA, LIEUTENANT. WE HAD WORD OF A GERMAN SURVEY PARTY AND WERE ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR THEM.

YOU CAN STOP SEARCHING, SIR. WE RAN INTO THEM OURSELVES.

SLADE TOLD WHAT HAD HAPPENED AND EXPLAINED ABOUT KRANE, RORKE AND THE PROFESSOR'S BOX . . .

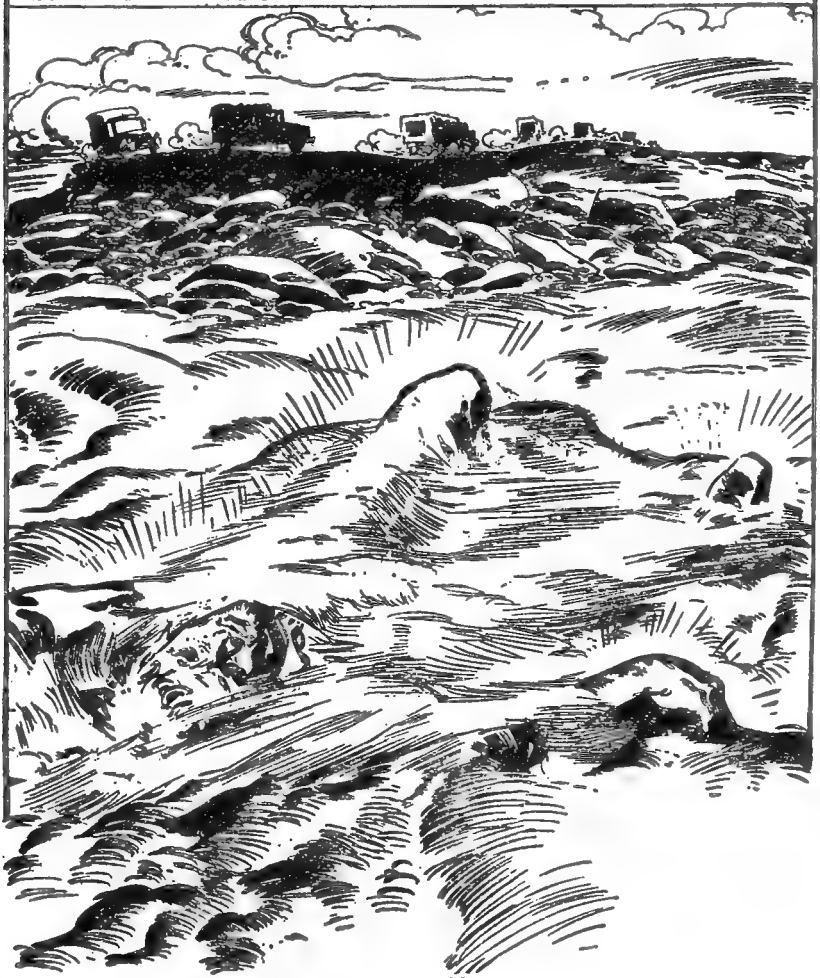
IT'S VERY IMPORTANT WE RECOVER THAT BOX.

I THINK I HAD BETTER WARN YOU THAT IF YOU FIND IT OPEN DON'T GO NEAR IT. IT WILL KILL YOU !

THEY LISTENED INCREDULOUSLY AS PROFESSOR PELL REVEALED THE SECRET OF THE BOX . . .

IT CONTAINS TWO MILLION POUNDS WORTH OF RADIUM, INTENDED FOR SECRET RESEARCH. THE RADIATION IT GIVES OUT IS TERRIBLY LETHAL . . .

LATER THAT DAY, THEY FOUND THE OPEN BOX AND THE BODY OF THE LUCKLESS RORKE, BUT KRANE WAS NEVER FOUND. HE HAD REAPED THE JUST REWARD OF HIS TREACHERY AND GREED. HE WAS IN SIGHT OF HIS GOAL WHEN THE DEADLY RADIATION OVERCAME HIM. THE DESERT SAND DRIFTED OVER HIS BODY AND BOTH HE AND THE PRECIOUS PHIAL HE CARRIED WERE LOST FOR EVER . . .



EIGHT TO ONE

THE REPORT CAME IN FROM THE REAR GUNNER AT 1900 HOURS PRECISELY . . .

SHELLS AND TRACER RIPPED THROUGH THE FLYING BOAT AS IT TURNED FIRST ONE WAY AND THEN THE OTHER, LIKE A GIANT GRIZZLY ATTACKED BY WOLVES.

NOW – CORKSCREW PORT – GO !

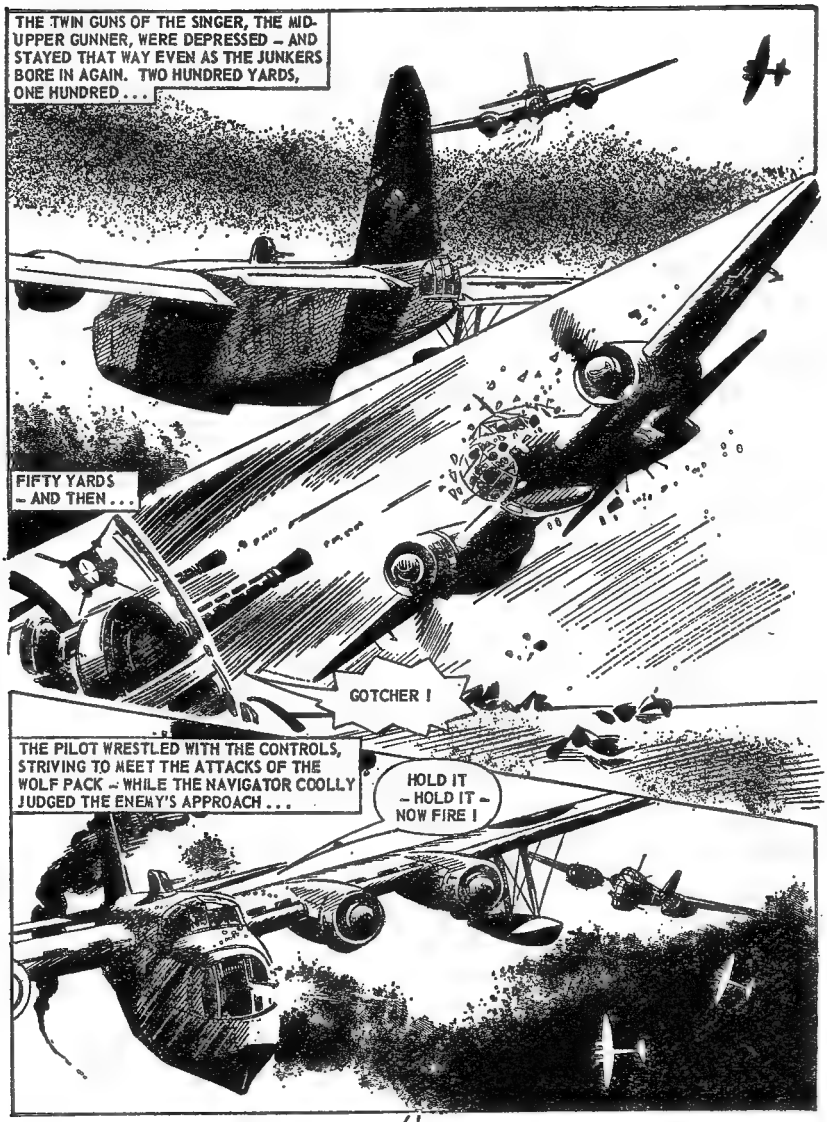
THAT FIRST SAVAGE ATTACK HAD WRECKED THE PORT OUTER ENGINE AND RIDDLED THE CONTROL DECK.

AAAGH ! I'M BURNING !

TWO MORE COMING IN . . .

AS SOMEONE GRABBED A FIRE EXTINGUISHER AND DOWSED THE CAPTAIN'S BLAZING CLOTHING, A VOICE CAME OVER THE INTERCOM, SINGING SOFTLY . . .

PRAISE THE LORD AND PASS THE AMMUNITION, PRAISE THE LORD AND . . .


THE TWIN GUNS OF THE SINGER, THE MID-UPPER GUNNER, WERE DEPRESSED – AND STAYED THAT WAY EVEN AS THE JUNKERS BORE IN AGAIN. TWO HUNDRED YARDS, ONE HUNDRED . . .
FIFTY YARDS – AND THEN . . .
GOTCHER !
THE PILOT WRESTLED WITH THE CONTROLS, STRIVING TO MEET THE ATTACKS OF THE WOLF PACK – WHILE THE NAVIGATOR COOLLY JUDGED THE ENEMY'S APPROACH . . .
HOLD IT – HOLD IT – NOW FIRE !

A SECOND ENEMY FIGHTER DIVED HEADLONG TOWARDS THE SEA LIKE A FLAMING COMET. BUT THE FLYING BOAT'S TAIL HAD BEEN SAVAGED MERCILESSLY . . .
CONTROL TO TAIL. CONTROL TO TAIL. CAN YOU HEAR ME ?
THERE WAS NO ANSWER FROM THE REAR GUNNER AND AS THE PILOT GAVE EMERGENCY ORDERS, THE PLANE'S BRIDGE WAS STRUCK AGAIN.
SOMEONE – GET BACK AND CHECK THE TAIL – AAAGH !
HECK – MY LEG !
SENSING THE SUNDERLAND TO BE AT THEIR MERCY, THE JUNKERS CLOSED IN FOR THE KILL – AND THE PILOT COULD ONLY GUESS AT THEIR ANGLE OF ATTACK.
LISTEN, SPARKS – THE INTERCOM'S DEAD ! I'LL SHOW YOU IN SIGN LANGUAGE WHAT I WANT THE SKIPPER TO DO. YOU PASS IT ON TO HIM – OKAY ?
UGH – YES, I'VE GOT WHAT YOU MEAN . . .

STILL THE ENEMY HARRIED THE CRIPPLED MONSTER, SOMETIMES SINGLY, SOMETIMES IN CONCERTED, TWO OR THREE-PLANE ASSAULTS THAT SWAMPED THE SUNDERLAND'S DEFENCES.

THREE COMING IN, ONE ASTERN, ONE FROM EACH BEAM. THEY'VE TWIGGED THE TAIL'S OUT OF ACTION . . .

THE SECOND PILOT WHO HAD GONE BACK TO CHECK ON THE TAIL GUNNER FOUND ONE OF THE MID-FUSELAGE MEN HUDDLED OVER HIS SINGLE VICKERS. GENTLY, HE EASED HIM TO THE GROUND . . .

'HE CAUGHT IT IN THEIR LAST PASS. HOW IS HE ?

HE'S HAD IT, I'M AFRAID. I'LL GET THE ENGINEER TO TAKE OVER HERE . . .

AS HE WENT ON ALONG THE CATWALK TOWARDS THE STERN, HE WAS FORCED ON TO ALL FOURS BY THE VIOLENT MANOEUVRES OF THE AIRCRAFT . . .

GRIEF ! SHE'S IN A RIGHT MESS !

HE FOUND THE REAR GUNNER ALSO SLUMPED OVER HIS BROWNINGS. THERE WERE SIGNS OF DAMAGE EVERYWHERE . . .
HEY, CAN YOU HEAR ME ? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT ? HERE, LET ME GET YOU OUT OF THERE . . .
BUT THE GUNNER SHRUGGED HIM OFF AND MANAGED A WEAK BUT REASSURING GRIN DESPITE THE EFFECTS OF SHOCK AND CONCUSSION.
NO – NO, LEAVE ME – I'LL BE ALL RIGHT . . .
AND, TO PROVE HIS WORDS, WHEN THE REMAINING ENEMY SWOOPED IN AGAIN, HIS FOUR BROWNINGS HAMMERED OUT A DEFIANT CHALLENGE. ONE OF THE 88s DID NOT PULL OUT OF ITS DIVE . . .

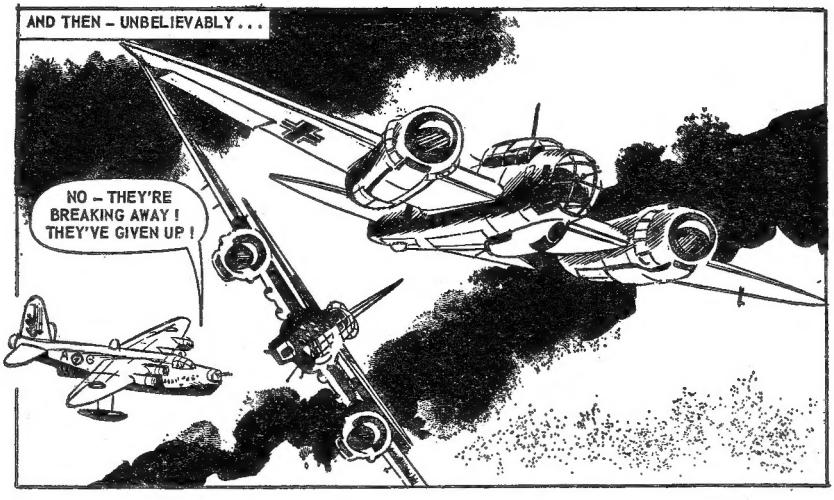
THE GERMANS WERE BECOMING ALMOST SUICIDAL IN THEIR ATTACKS NOW – AND ANOTHER PAID THE PENALTY OF VENTURING WITHIN CLOSE RANGE OF THE GUNNERS' FIRST-CLASS SHOOTING.

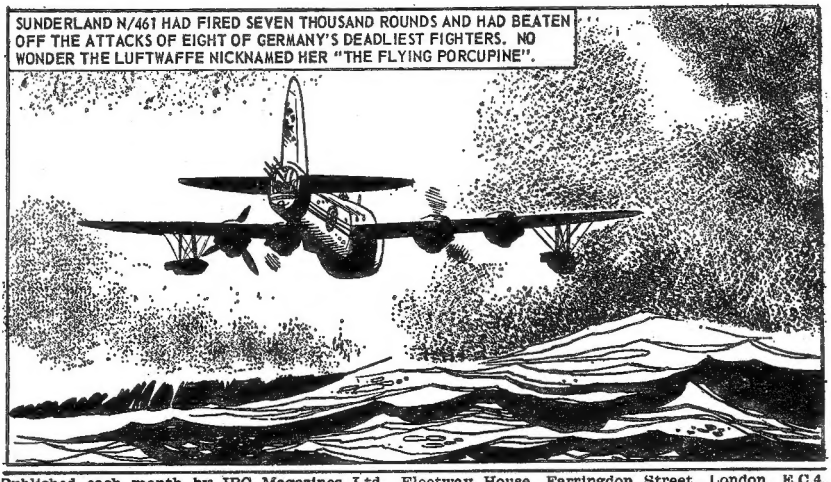
SUDDENLY, AFTER A BRIEF LULL, THE NAVIGATOR YELLED ABOVE THE BROKEN ROAR OF THE OVER-TAXED ENGINES . . .

THERE'RE ONLY TWO LEFT – ONLY TWO !

BUT EVEN TWO JU-88s WERE STILL A DEADLY MENACE TO THE MUCH SLOWER FLYING BOAT. THE NAVIGATOR WATCHED THEM TURN TOWARDS HIM . . .

HERE THEY COME – TWO THOUSAND YARDS – CLOSING . . .





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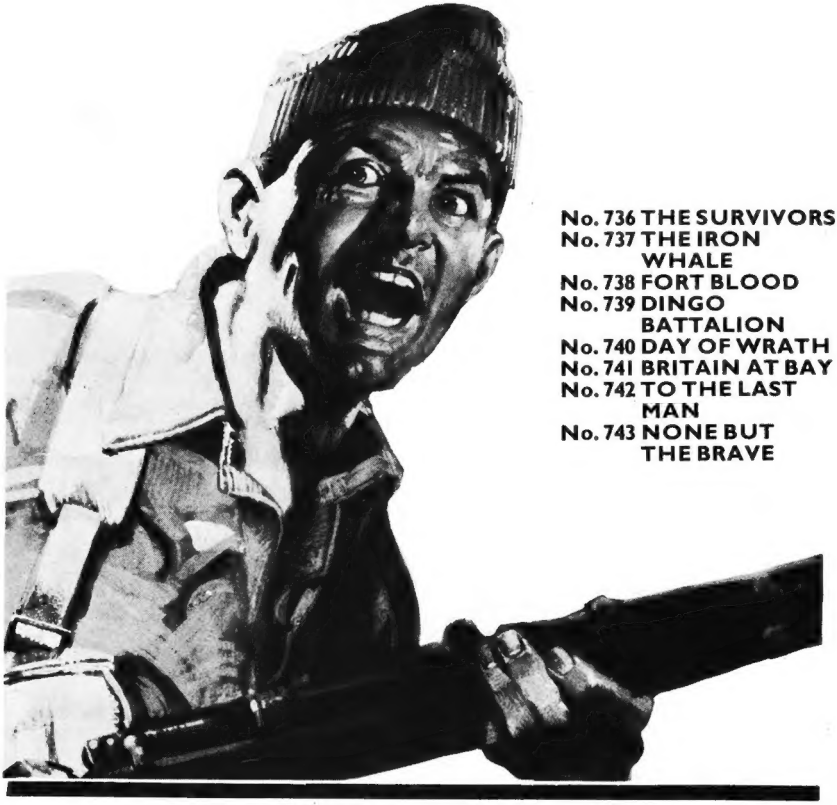

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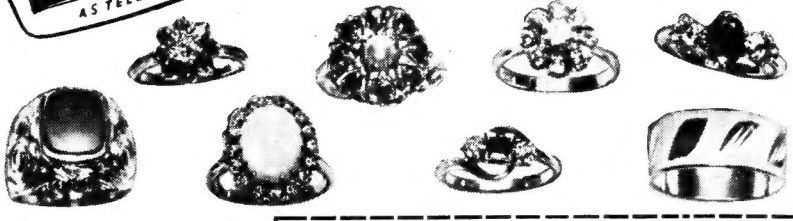

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